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INFO RUEHXK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUEHZM/GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUCNISL/ISLAMIC COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

RUCNDTA/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 0063

C O N F I D E N T I A L JEDDAH 000005

SIPDIS

STATE FOR NEA/FO, NEA/ARP; IO, IO/OIC, IO/PPC, IO/UNP;
RIYADH PASS TO DHAHRAN

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SUBJECT: OIC HOLDS JANUARY 3 MINISTERIAL LEVEL MEETING ON
GAZA AND ISSUES COMMUNIQUE CONDEMNING ISRAEL

REF: 08 JEDDAH 0540

Classified By: Consul General Martin R. Quinn, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary.

The Organization of the Islamic Conference issued a communique at the end of its January 3 ministerial level meeting strongly condemning Israel for its role in the conflict in Gaza and calling for a series of steps aimed at stopping the violence. The OIC is emphasizing the need for the UN Security Council to take a more active role. The OIC assigns the lion's share of responsibility for the conflict to Israel. End Summary.

2.. (SBU) On January 3 in Jeddah, the Organization of the Islamic Conference's Executive Committee held an extraordinary meeting at the level of foreign ministers to address the hostilities in the Gaza strip. This meeting was preceded by a meeting of OIC member state ambassadors to the body. The international press as well as local media widely reported the decision of the body to condemn Israel for its ongoing military engagement in Gaza.

13. (SBU) The foreign ministers' meeting concluded with the issuance of a final communique, now publicly available on the OIC website: www.oic-oci.org/oicnew/english/conf/exec/FC-exec-fm-Gaza-En.p df. The opening operative clauses of the communique read that the OIC:

1A. Strongly condemns the ongoing brutal Israeli assault on the Palestinian people in Gaza, which has claimed the lives of hundreds of civilians, injured thousands, and caused colossal destruction of homes, civilian facilities, infrastructure and places of worship as a blatant violation of international law and war crimes and crimes against humanity, and calls for bringing culprits to international justice.

1B. Requests the international community to act immediately to end the Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip, to secure an immediate ceasefire, return to calm, and cessation of all hostilities to provide immediate protection for the Palestinian people, and to compel Israel, the occupying power, to lift its oppressive blockade on the Gaza Strip and to open the crossings.

14. (C) The communique called on the UN Security Council to adopt a resolution "compelling Israel to immediately stop its aggression." It requested the convening of an emergency OIC Human Rights Council meeting. There is no mention of any Palestinian responsibility for the conflict. There is a call for "Palestinian factions to end their differences and the state of divisions, and immediately resume national dialogue to ensure Palestinian national unity, serve the higher

interests of the Palestinian people and strengthen their ability to continue their just struggle to regain their fundamental national rights."

¶15. (SBU) In a press conference held after the meeting, Secretary General Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu reiterated the major points of the communique and condemned Israel for its role in the conflict. He emphasized the need for the UN to take action.

¶16. (C) In a January 4 telcon with POLOFF, Ufuk Gokcen, advisor to the OIC SYG, made note of an Iranian proposal to organize a ministerial summit on the matter of Gaza. Gokcen said that the measure requiring a 2/3 majority "so far has no movement(we circulated the request from Iran, but so far there is no response from anybody." Gokcen had no other comment other than to note the importance of the communique.

¶17. Comment. The OIC's communique and public statements do not recognize the role of Hamas or Palestinian militants in triggering the latest round of violence in Gaza. The omission is important less due to its potential to fuel anger among member states than because it reflects the perception among most OIC members that the conflict is due entirely due to Israeli "aggression." End Comment.

QUINN